have been instructed to keep a strict watch over the expenditure and to review their programmes and schemes with a view to eliminating inessential items of expenditure.

Affairs of Hindustan Diamond Company

342. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Diamond Company has established any liaison office in Delhi;

(b) whether this office is doing any liaison work on behalf of the South African Company, De Beers in Delhi; and

(c) whether it is a fact that though Hindustan Diamond Company is not engaged in exports, its Chairman is a permanent invitee at the meetings of the working Committee of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council and if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Shri S.N. Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, Hindustan Diamond Company Ltd. is one of the nominees of the Govt. on the Working Committee of the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council.

Promotion of SC candidates in the office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)

343. SHRI T.R. BALU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that two senior officers in the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) belonging to Scheduled Castes were dropped while nominating officers as Government Directors on the Board of State Handicrafts Corporations; and

(b) if so, whether this action is in consonance with Government's policy of encouraging Scheduled Castes/Tribes for promotional purpose and if not, what corrective steps are proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, It is true, but only coincidental, that two officers belonging to Scheduled Caste who were earlier Directors in certain State Corporations were not renominated on the Boards of State Handicrafts Corporations. The renomination was part of a routine exercise undertaken from time to time to decide which officer will represent Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) in the State Handicrafts Corporations. There is no policy of special representation of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribe in so far as officers are nominated to represent the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) on the Boards of State/Central Handicrafts Development Corporation. However, one of the officers in the list of renominated Directors does belong to Scheduled Caste.

Dialogue with ABSU for separate State in Assam

344. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to initiate dialogue with the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) regarding their demand for a separate Bodo State; and

(b) if so what steps have been taken in that direction?